



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

Case No. F-2012-28920

Rich Jones  
MuckRock News  
DEPT MR 1347  
P.O. Box 55819  
Boston, MA 02205

MAY - 9 2013


Dear Mr. Jones:

In response to your request dated June 1, 2012 under the Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA"), 5 U.S.C. § 552, the Department of State can neither confirm nor deny the existence or nonexistence of records responsive to your request because doing so would reveal information that is currently and properly classified and therefore exempt under FOIA exemption (b)(1), 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(1). The Department of State therefore denies your request pursuant to FOIA exemption (b)(1).

You have the right to appeal our determination within 60 days. A copy of the appeals procedures is enclosed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles L. Davis".



Sheryl L. Walter, Director  
Office of Information Programs and Services

Enclosure:  
As stated.

Rules and Regulations

Subpart F – Appeal Procedures

§171.52 Appeal of denial of access to, declassification of, amendment of, accounting of disclosures of, or challenge to classification of records.

- (a) *Right of administrative appeal.* Except for records that have been reviewed and withheld within the past two years or are the subject of litigation, any requester whose request for access to records, declassification of records, amendment of records, accounting of disclosure of records, or any authorized holder of classified information whose classification challenge has been denied, has a right to appeal the denial to the Department's Appeals Review Panel. This appeal right includes the right to appeal the determination by the Department that no records responsive to an access request exist in Department files. Privacy Act appeals may be made only by the individual to whom the records pertain.
- (b) *Form of appeal.* There is no required form for an appeal. However, it is essential that the appeal contain a clear statement of the decision or determination by the Department being appealed. When possible, the appeal should include argumentation and documentation to support the appeal and to contest the bases for denial cited by the Department. The appeal should be sent to: Chairman, Appeals Review Panel, c/o Appeals Officer, A/GIS/IPS/PP/LC, U.S. Department of State, SA-2, Room 8100, Washington, DC 20522-8100.
- (c) *Time Limits.* The appeal should be received within 60 days of the date of receipt by the requester of the Department's denial. The time limit for response to an appeal begins to run on the day the appeal is received. The time limit (excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal public holidays) for agency decision on an administrative appeal is 20 days under the FOIA (which may be extended for up to an additional 10 days in unusual circumstances) and 30 days under the Privacy Act (which the Panel may extend an additional 30 days for good cause shown). The Panel shall decide mandatory declassification review appeals as promptly as possible.
- (d) *Notification to appellant.* The Chairman of the Appeals Review Panel shall notify the appellant in writing of the Panel's decision on the appeal. When the decision is to uphold the denial, the Chairman shall include in his notification the reasons therefor. The appellant shall be advised that the decision of the Panel represents the final decision of the Department and of the right to seek judicial review of the Panel's decision, when applicable. In mandatory declassification review appeals, the Panel shall advise the requester of the right to appeal the decision to the Interagency Security Classification Appeals Panel under §3.5(d) of E.O. 12958.